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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 02/23/10

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ARTICLES:

(1) DM Kitazawa says government to sound out local governments, U.S. on multiple Futenma relocation proposals

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)  
Evening, February 23, 2010

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa commented on the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa at a news conference held after the cabinet meeting on the morning of Feb. 23. He said: "It will be difficult to proceed by deciding on one single plan, making it public, and entering into negotiations." He thus indicated that there is a strong possibility that the government will sound out the affected local governments and the U.S. on multiple relocation proposals.

Kitazawa said: "It is also possible, for example, for Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano to (sound out) what Okinawa or the U.S. thinks before a proposal is firmed up in order to push the process forward steadily."

He reiterated his opinion that the government and ruling parties' examination committee should wrap up its discussions by the end of this month.

In this connection, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano commented on the relocation proposals to be submitted by the ruling

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parties to the examination committee at a news conference after the cabinet meeting on the same day. He said: "For example, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) will have to look into whether the facility is in a usable state or if it is adequate for use as a military base," indicating that the candidate relocation sites will be narrowed down after the MOD checks on their feasibility as relocation sites.

Meanwhile, Consumer Affairs Minister Mizuho Fukushima, leader of the Social Democratic Party, told a news conference: "I have not received any reports that the government has looked into the possibility of relocation out of Japan or out of Okinawa thoroughly. I hope (the discussions) will not be rash."

(2) Henoko residents oppose proposal on Futenma relocation to Camp Schwab inland area

SANKEI ONLINE (Full)  
12:50, February 23, 2010

In connection with the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa), in light of the government's sounding out the U.S. on the "Camp Schwab inland proposal," which calls for building a helipad in Camp Schwab (in Henoko, Nago City), the "special committee on the Futenma replacement facility" consisting of representatives of the residents of the Henoko district decided on Feb. 23 to oppose this proposal.

Committee members plan to visit the Okinawa Defense Bureau with representatives of the neighboring Toyohara and Kushi districts on Feb. 25 to present a letter demanding that the inland relocation proposal not be adopted.

Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine has also declared his opposition to the inland plan. A member of the special committee said: "The starting point of Futenma relocation is to remove danger. The inland proposal will only transfer the danger. We are determined to oppose any plans being promoted by the government without consulting the local communities."

(3) Plan to "relocate" Futenma base to Camp Schwab's inland area: Hatoyama administration turns its back on popular will

AKAHATA (Page 3) (Full)  
February 20, 2010

Nobuyuki Horaguchi

In connection with the "relocation" of the U.S. Marines' Futenma Air Station, the government's studying a plan to "relocate" the base to the inland area of Camp Schwab and sounding out the U.S. government on this proposal behind the scenes is an act of trampling on popular will as expressed in the Nago mayoral election on Jan. 24.

"The citizens of Nago City cannot accept any additional burden," said Mayor Susumu Inamine. "You must not come up with a conclusion that will disappoint the citizens." Inamine, who won election with a pledge to oppose the construction of a new military base for Futenma's "relocation," conveyed to the leaders of the government and the political parties in Tokyo on Feb. 17 and 18 the same popular will as expressed in the referendum conducted 13 years ago.

Although Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama responded "I take this

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seriously," he was at the same time studying the Camp Schwab inland proposal, which runs completely against the popular will.

This also contradicts Hatoyama's pledge to relocate the Futenma base out of Okinawa or out of Japan in the general election last August, which forced out the Liberal Democratic Party -New Komeito administration that promoted the reinforcement of U.S. military bases. A former senior government official well-versed in security issues says: "Since the security environment has not changed from the time he pledged to relocate (the Futenma base) out of Okinawa or out of Japan, revoking the pledge will be unacceptable to the people."

Flight routes over civilian housing

The Camp Schwab inland plan was a proposal floated several times under the LDP-New Komeito administration. However, this proposal was dropped because of U.S. opposition to the relocation of training grounds and large-scale leveling of hilly areas it would entail. Doubts about the plan have already been expressed in the government. Minister for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs Seiji Maehara said on Feb. 19: "Review of this proposal requires consideration of how to resolve the issues of relocation of (the U.S. forces') firing exercises and the flight of helicopters over civilian housing."

The existing plan to build V-shaped runways in the coastal area of Camp Schwab was adopted in the first place under the pretext of the need to avoid aircraft flying over civilian houses. Under the inland relocation plan, it will not be possible to avoid flying over civilian residences no matter how the flight routes are set. Furthermore, U.S. forces are mulling deployment of the highly accident-prone M-22 Osprey, a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, in the future.

The need for a 1,600-meter-class runway is based on the assumption of deploying the Osprey. Hills inside the military base will have to be leveled on a large scale, and there is great danger that the sea in Oura Bay off Henoko will be affected by outflow of earth and sand from the construction site.

The Camp Schwab inland plan will not only impose a burden on Okinawa; it will reportedly also involve the relocation of helicopter units from the Futenma base to the candidate "relocation sites" picked by the Hatoyama administration, such as the Tokunoshima and Mageshima islands in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Disregard of international law

The Futenma base was originally built with land U.S. forces forcibly grabbed from the local residents in disregard of international law after World War II. The fact that the government is desperately looking for a "relocation site" for the Futenma base, which the U.S. admits is the "most dangerous military base in the world," is tantamount to affirmation of the existence of the illegally built dangerous Futenma base.

If Prime Minister Hatoyama and the other leaders are true to their words that "election results need to be respected since (Japan) is a democratic country" (Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa on Feb. 17) and "we will adopt a plan giving consideration to the feelings of Nago's mayor and Okinawa's people" (People's New Party leader Shizuka Kamei), they should enter negotiations with the U.S. for the

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immediate removal of this dangerous military base.

(4) Government clings to land-based Futenma relocation plan

ASAHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
February 19, 2010

The inland area of Camp Schwab is being mentioned in the Hatoyama administration as a possible relocation site for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama thinks the idea is worth studying. But the same idea was brushed aside by the U.S. side five years ago. The idea is also drawing objections from the affected municipalities and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). There are high barriers to materializing the idea.

On Feb. 18, a cabinet minister made the following remark on where to relocate Futenma: "The United States is opening up. They are increasingly aware that the Futenma issue must not be allowed to undermine the overall Japan-U.S. alliance." Meanwhile, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Commander Lt. General Keith Stalder recently indicated that any new plan must be equal to or better than the existing plan to relocate Futenma to Henoko in Nago. Stalder's words represent the U.S. stance. Nevertheless, the cabinet minister's view is that the United States will come to the negotiating table with Japan in time.

Some sources connected with the government are confident that Tokyo will be able to obtain local consent on the land-based plan. Their confidence comes from the logic that the central government has exclusive authority over security affairs and all the government has to do is notify the affected municipalities of its final decision.

Camp Schwab's inland area is adjacent to the coastal area of Henoko on which Japan and the United States agreed in May 2006. The only major difference with the Henoko plan is that the runway would be built on a U.S. base that is protected by tight security - a condition that would make it difficult for opponents to obstruct construction work.

The People's New Party (PNP) also came up with its own Schwab inland plan. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa urged the SDP and PNP executives to present their parties' plans early while dining with them on the night of Feb. 16. Kitazawa apparently wanted to put the land-based Schwab plan on the table to create a trend in favor of it.

"We have already explained to the Prime Minister, the chief cabinet secretary, and the DPJ side about our party's plans," PNP leader Shizuka Kamei said in a press conference on Feb. 17.

Some cabinet members began indicating this year that the Schwab land-based plan is the only realistic plan. Finding a brand new site by May would be difficult. Concerned persons share the fear that if this situation persists, the Futenma base will remain in use indefinitely.

On Feb. 17, the press corps pointed out that the land-based plan was examined to no avail in the past. In response, Prime Minister Hatoyama said that it is still worth looking into plans that were dropped in the course of negotiations.

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Little hope for obtaining local consent

It might be harder than the administration thinks to obtain the consent from the three concerned parties - the affected communities, the ruling parties, and the United States - that is essential for determining the relocation site.

Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine told Prime Minister Hatoyama at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) on Feb. 18 that he will oppose the ground-based plan, not to mention the existing Henoko plan.

The DPJ prefectural chapter also hastily held a press conference in Naha on Feb. 18 and released a statement saying that the organization will remain opposed to any plans to relocate the base within Okinawa.

The Kantei is not making efforts to take local wishes into consideration.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, who is serving as a coordinator of the Futenma issue, will visit Okinawa on Feb. 19-20. According to DPJ Okinawa chapter policy chief Tadashi Uesato, Hirano declined requests for meetings by the prefectural chapter and the prefectural assembly chairman. "They are not making efforts to listen to the local views," Uesato said angrily. "His actions can be taken to mean that they are making decisions behind our backs, which is not good."

The SDP, one of the DPJ's coalition partners, also remains opposed to relocation within Okinawa.

Nago Mayor Inamine called on SDP head Mizuho Fukushima at party headquarters on the evening of Feb. 17. In the session, Fukushima encouraged the new Nago mayor, telling him that the SDP will work together with him. Later that day, Inamine dined in Tokyo with lawmakers from Okinawa, including SDP Lower House member Kantoku Teruya. At the dinner table, Teruya and others pressed PNP policy chief Mikio Shimoji to withdraw the land-based plan.

For the SDP, the Futenma relocation issue is a top priority. The party cannot afford to make compromises on moving Futenma out of Okinawa or of Japan. If the government adopts the land-based plan, some SDP members are certain to call for a departure from the ruling coalition.

In 2005 the U.S. side rejected the idea of moving Futenma functions to the inland area of Camp Schwab that came from Tokyo during the Koizumi administration. A person connected to the U.S. government explained: "It will be possible to implement the Henoko plan if the Japanese government decides to do so. The land-based plan is out of the question. A 500-meter runway will be insufficient to accommodate the helicopters returning from Afghanistan. If we try to extend the runway, the construction cranes make it impossible for us to use the runway."

According to a Japanese official responsible for talk in 2005, the U.S. side is fiercely opposed to Japan's plan to build a runway near the firing range, citing the danger of misfiring at aircraft and other factors. Tokyo also looked into a plan to construct a runway far away from the training area and close to a residential area, but the government gave up on it, concluding that it would not be able

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to obtain local understanding.

(5) Nago not to include new projects funded by realignment subsidies in fiscal 2010 budget

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)  
February 23, 2010

Daihachiro Gushi, Nago

Nago City (Mayor: Susumu Inamine) has decided not to include in its fiscal 2010 budget any new projects funded by U.S. military realignment subsidies. Mayor Inamine, who won the election in January on a pledge opposing the existing plan to relocate the U.S.

Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to the coastal area of Henoko in the city, has concluded that government subsidies authorized under the U.S. force realignment facilitation law, predicated on the relocation plan, are incompatible (with opposition to it). At the same time, the city will include in its budget the funds for projects that are already underway and ask the central government to continue to provide subsidies until they are completed.

Included in the new projects that will not be financed by the government's realignment subsidies are, among other projects, the Kube 3rd district sewerage project expected to cost 7 to 10 billion yen in total, and subsidies for the operation of the regional exchange key facility for the area north of Futami. They are all in the planning stages. Specific methods for carrying out the projects are under consideration.

The government unofficially announced that it would provide some 1.4 billion yen in realignment subsidies to Nago in fiscal 2007-2008, and 10 billion yen in fiscal 2009. Subsidies comparable to those of the previous year were expected for fiscal 2010 as well. The city does not foresee any impact for the time being on such projects as the school bus services project for the north of the Futami district, which has used over 700 million yen from the city's realignment subsidies, and the unified primary and middle school education system.

The central government provides subsidies to local governments in accordance with progress in implementing U.S. military realignment plans under the law to facilitate U.S. force realignment, which was enacted in May 2007. It is time-limited legislation valid until March 2017. Five municipalities in Okinawa, including Nago, are entitled to receive subsidies.

The government plans to have the Okinawa base issues examination committee composed of the ruling coalition parties reach a conclusion by the end of May on possible Futenma relocation sites, including places other than Henoko. The People's New Party is studying the inland area of Camp Schwab in the Henoko district in Nago. The future course of efforts to determine where to relocate the base is still unclear.

(6) Attention focused on DPJ's views of national security in discussion on revising National Defense Program Guidelines; expert panel placing "emphasis on Asia" set up

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
February 19, 2010

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A study group began a discussion on revising the National Defense Program Guidelines yesterday. This is the fourth revision in the postwar period. How will the panel address China's military buildup and the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance? How will it approach long-standing challenges, such as easing the three principles on arms export? Attention will be focused on the details of the Hatoyama administration's views on national security.

How to reflect change of government in review

The initial focus of attention was on who would be picked as members of the expert panel tasked with drafting a report on revising the National Defense Program Guidelines. Views on security issues are not unified in the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The lineup of the panel is a key element in assessing what effect the change of government will have on the nation's future defense buildup plan.

Keihan Electric Railway CEO Shigetaka Sato was tapped to chair the expert panel. Few in the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Ministry had information about his career and background when he was appointed. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano selected the influential figure in the business community of the Kansai district, where Hirano is from. Sato is scheduled to become president of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in late March.

Discussion starts from scratch

The previous Aso government also established an expert panel on revising the guidelines last year and issued a report in August under Tokyo Electric Power Co. Chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata, who chaired the panel.

The Hatoyama administration, which was inaugurated in September, decided to effectively scratch the previous report and go back to square one. The number of members was also increased from nine in the previous panel to 11. In addition, the lineup of the panel shows its stance of placing emphasis on Asia.

Takashi Shiraishi is known as an expert on Asian politics. Takako Hirose specializes in Indian and Pakistan affairs, and Yasuhiro Matsuda is an expert on Chinese affairs. It is said that the Defense Ministry drafted the list of members, but a senior Foreign Ministry official commented: "I can sense the panel's eagerness to start discussing the issue from scratch."

Meanwhile, Hiroshi Nakanishi and Ryoza Kato were members of the previous panel and are controversialists who theoretically supported the LDP-led governments' stance toward the Japan-U.S. alliance. A Defense Ministry source said: "Some might have different views from the Hatoyama administration's view of the U.S., such as Yoshihide Soeya, a veteran scholar, and Takashi Saito, a former top uniformed officer" (in addition to Nakanishi and Kato).

Members of the expert panel

Chairman Shigetaka Sato Keihan Electric Railway CEO  
Members Yoko Iwama National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies  
professor (international politics)  
Takashi Shiraishi Institute of Developing Economies president  
(Asian politics)  
Yoshihide Soeya Keio University professor (international politics)

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Hiroshi Nakanishi Kyoto University professor (international politics)  
Takako Hirose Senshu University professor (South Asia politics)  
Yasuhiro Matsuda Tokyo University associate professor (Chinese politics, diplomacy and security)  
Tadashi Yamamoto Japan Center for International Exchange president

Expert members Yasunari Ito Former vice defense minister  
Ryoza Kato Former ambassador to the U.S.  
Takashi Saito Former Joint Staff chairman

"Taboo-free discussion"

Reviewing the guidelines will affect the foundation of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation, so it is closely linked to the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) released by the U.S. Obama administration on Feb. 1. The QDR expressed concern about China's military buildup, including military action in cyberspace, and emphasized the need for close ties between the U.S. and its allies. It is also worth looking at how the Hatoyama administration will respond to the Obama administration's call.

Delivering a speech at an informal gathering yesterday, Hatoyama said: "I think it is necessary to have the new guidelines fall into step with the QDR, but it is important to thoroughly discuss first what Japan's security strategy should be and then consider coordination with the QDR."

A senior Defense Ministry official stressed: "Since security situations do not significantly change in a year, experts' views should not change remarkably, either. The question is how the government and the ruling parties will address this fact." DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka said: "Relations between Japan, China and the U.S. should be equally balanced like an equilateral triangle." On China's military threat and future options for the U.S.'s deterrence, there is a possibility that the new guidelines will not reflect the contents of the panel's report.

## Relaxation of three principles on arms export

The three principles on arms export were one of the major themes in the report issued last year. Defense Minister Yoshimi Kitazawa said in a meeting yesterday: "The prime minister said that 'the discussions should be taboo-free.' This is a welcome statement." Kitazawa's remark indicates the ministry's willingness to positively address the easing of the three principles. The defense minister had in mind the fact that multinational joint development of large-sized equipment such as fighters has been promoted in the U.S. and Europe against the backdrop of such equipment becoming more efficient and expensive.

The joint development and production of the ballistic missile defense system with the U.S. is now outside the application of the three principles. Attention is now focused on how many more exceptions will be made.

## Possibility of reducing budget, personnel

Another focus of attention is on how to streamline the defense budget and personnel. Prime Minister Hatoyama said: "It is necessary to fully consider the budgetary limits." The defense minister also emphasized in the meeting yesterday: "It is necessary to make the

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nation's effective defense capabilities more efficient." He indicated that discussions will be conducted on what to do about the number and effective strength of Self-Defense Force members and how to acquire equipment more effectively.

(7) Editorial: National Defense Program Guidelines - Deepen debate on how to strengthen deterrence

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Full)  
February 19, 2010

Prospects for Japan's security environment are not bright either for the present or for the medium- to long-term. To address this situation, it is critical for Japan to deepen the debate on how to strengthen deterrence.

The government's blue-ribbon panel for reexamining the National Defense Program Guidelines recently held its first meeting. The government will amend the existing defense guidelines by the end of the year based on a report to be compiled by the advisory panel this summer.

Although the Hatoyama administration had initially planned to amend the present guidelines at the end of last year, it postponed the submission by one year in order to come up with new ideas and avoid a hasty decision.

Japan should be keenly aware of the dangerous security situation in the region. North Korea conducted two nuclear tests last year. It has also demonstrated its ballistic missile capability. However, the Six-Party Talks have been suspended.

China has rapidly modernized its navy and air force by increasing its national defense spending by more than 10 percent for 22 years in a row. If the pace of China's military buildup continues at this rate, China may gain an advantage in the military balance in East Asia.

The possibility of China stepping up its moves to secure maritime interests in the East China Sea cannot be ruled out either, since it is already doing so in the South China Sea. How would Japan respond to such a situation?

Defense capabilities cannot be improved immediately. It is important to strengthen deterrence by improving the effectiveness of the Self-Defense Forces equipment and organization while also enhancing the effectiveness of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

In order to deepen the Japan-U.S. alliance, such factors as an improvement in the missile defense system, the formulation of a



defense cooperation program for contingencies, and the strengthening of bilateral information sharing are indispensable.

The issue of the right of collective self-defense should also be looked into. The government and ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) intend to reexamine the role of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, including the possibility of prohibiting the bureau director general from answering questions in the Diet. A review of the bureau's constitutional interpretation that Japan holds the right of collective self-defense but cannot use it should be discussed.

Japan also needs to formulate a system to allow the SDF to actively

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participate in international peace cooperation activities.

The stability of the world and Asia will lead to the security and prosperity of Japan, a trade-oriented country. The government has dispatched Ground Self-Defense Force personnel to Haiti to take part in United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, the government should review the SDF's equipment and organization so that the SDF can take part in a variety of missions.

It is time to put an end to the downward trend in defense outlays. Japan lacks a sense of crisis regarding its dwindling defense expenditures amid neighboring countries' substantial increases in national defense spending.

To be sure, the legacy of the Cold War era should be rectified. Reductions in GSDF strength, number of tanks, and size of arsenals are possible. The ineffective defense procurement system should be substantially reformed. Furthermore, a review of the three principles on arms exports is imperative.

(8) Editorial: Outcome of Nagasaki gubernatorial election should be taken as manifestation of public distrust in government

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)  
February 22, 2010

The candidate endorsed by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) was defeated in the Nagasaki gubernatorial election. The outcome is a manifestation of the voters' distrust in the government over politics-and-money scandals involving Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa. The prime minister must take this election result seriously.

The first gubernatorial election this year was substantially a one-on-one fight between a former section chief at the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry -- endorsed by the DPJ, the Social Democratic Party and the People's New Party -- and a former vice governor -- supported by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito.

Viewing the Nagasaki election as a bellwether for the House of Councillors election this summer, senior officials of both camps faced off in war of words.

In the House of Representatives election last August, in which the party grabbed the reins of government, the DPJ gained a victory in all four single-seat constituencies in Nagasaki Prefecture. The party also won the Upper House elections in 2004 and 2007 in succession.

Therefore, a defeat of the DPJ-backed candidate was hardly expected, but it had been reported from early on that the ruling camp-endorsed candidate was having a tough time. Despite the earnest support by cabinet ministers and senior DPJ members, who stumped for the candidate even from before the official announcement of the election, the candidate was beaten by his opposition-camp-backed rival.

It is said that local elections are not directly connected to national politics, but the main cause for the DPJ's defeat was public distrust in the government over the politics-and-money scandals.

In the case of illegal political donations involving Ozawa's fund-management organization in violation of the Political Funds Control Law, Ozawa was not criminally charged. In opinion surveys, however, nearly 90 PERCENT of respondents said that his explanations were unsatisfactory. More than 70 PERCENT called for Ozawa's resignation as secretary general.

Hatoyama has also been lambasted because his receipt of a large amount of funds from his mother has discouraged people from paying taxes.

The politics-and-money scandals involving Hatoyama and Ozawa have slowly and steadily cooled the ardor sensed after the change of government.

Fully aware that his scandal has created among the people distrust of the government, Ozawa should provide an account before the Diet in response to growing calls for him to give an explanation. Depending on circumstances, he might be pressed to make a hard decision, including the possibility of resigning.

The DPJ must make utmost efforts to dispel public distrust by showing a way of assuming political responsibility different from that of LDP governments in the past.

Meanwhile, the LDP is probably aiming at bolstering its strength, taking this victory as a turning point. Even so, the party did not endorse the candidate, stemming from the judgment that if the party, which suffered a crushing defeat in the earlier Lower House election, was at the forefront of the campaign, there might have been repercussions, although party headquarters sent well-known lawmakers, including Lower House member Shinjiro Koizumi, to Nagasaki to stump for him. It therefore cannot be said that the LDP won in a head-to-head confrontation. One member after another has left the LDP. That proves that its efforts at revitalization have so far fallen short.

President Sadakazu Tanigaki and other LDP executive members should make efforts to reform the party without being carried away by the victory this time; otherwise, regaining the reins of government in the Upper House election will become just a pipe dream.

(9) Editorial: Japan should send the clear message that Takeshima is part of its territory

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)  
February 22, 2010

As usual, a memorial ceremony will be held in Matsue City on Feb. 22, Takeshima Day. It has been five years since the Shimane prefectural government established a Takeshima Day ordinance. It is regrettable that this year again no one connected to the central government is scheduled to attend the ceremony.

On this day (five years ago), the Shimane prefectural government made an announcement (designating the day as Takeshima Day) based on the government's cabinet decision in 1905 to place Takeshima under the prefecture's jurisdiction. Historically and legally, Takeshima is clearly an integral part of Japan. Despite that, in 1952 the Lee Sung-man administration of South Korea, which gained independence after World War II, unilaterally established the "Lee Line,"

declaring that Takeshima (South Korean name: Dokdo) was part of its territory. Since then, South Korea has been illegally occupying Takeshima.

The territorial dispute cannot be settled by the Shimane prefectural government alone. It is a matter that must be addressed by the central government. According to the prefecture, invitations have been sent to the foreign minister and the agriculture, forestry, and

fisheries minister every year, but neither has attended the annual event. If the ministers find it difficult to attend the event, either a senior vice minister or a parliamentary secretary should attend.

The Japanese government's recent half-hearted response to South Korea is also a problem.

In July 2008 the Education, Science, and Technology Ministry announced new curriculum guidelines for middle school teachers that included the Takeshima territorial issue for the first time. Even so, apparently out of consideration for the ROK, wording that Takeshima is an "integral part of Japan" was dropped -- a clear setback from the initial plan to indicate Japan's sovereignty over the islets. It was a result of coordination in the cabinet of (then) Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda.

But the ROK was still unhappy and took strong measures, temporarily recalling its ambassador to Japan.

Late last year, the education ministry under the Hatoyama administration announced new guidelines for high school teachers that did not mention Takeshima in the section of territorial disputes, a further setback for a clear expression of territorial sovereignty.

As a result, Seoul simply called the Japanese ambassador to South Korea to express its regret and concern, softening its response. Giving excessive consideration to South Korea undermines national interests and sovereignty.

In contrast to South Korea's excessive reactions, Japan's responses have been hardly noticeable.

The cover of the white paper on defense released last February by South Korea's Defense Ministry carried for the first time a photograph of Takeshima, which the country has been occupying illegally. In reaction, the Japanese government simply summoned a counselor at the South Korean Embassy in Japan to the Foreign Ministry and lodged a protest. The government did not make the step public. The reason was not to provoke the South Korean public, according to a source connected to the Japanese Embassy in South Korea.

Lodging a protest via a diplomatic channel is meaningless unless people at home and abroad are aware of it. Japan should disseminate more clearly to the international community the message that Takeshima is part of its territory.

(10) Next Keidanren chairman eyes dialogue with government

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)  
February 23, 2010

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Sumitomo Chemical Chairman Hiromasa Yonekura (72), the incoming chairman of the Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), held a press conference on Feb. 22. During the press conference, he expressed his aspirations, saying, "I would like to press ahead with discussions and talks with the government." He appears to be strongly aware of the need to reconstruct relations with the ruling parties, which had completely cooled off during a time when Fuji Mitarai (chairman of Canon) was chairman. However, the ruling camp is distancing itself from Keidanren, which has a strong imprint of being a spokesman for leading companies. Not many predict that the relationship between the ruling parties and Keidanren will improve anytime soon after Yonekura takes office in May.

Sense of crisis

Yonekura repeatedly expressed his stance of cooperating with the government during the press conference, which lasted for about 25 minutes. He made these remarks against a backdrop of the Hatoyama administration's cold attitude toward leading companies.

On Feb. 17, Japanese Communist Party Chair Shii broached the idea of taxing the internal reserves of companies. The prime minister indicated a positive stance toward the idea, albeit temporarily.

Probably with the prime minister's stance of viewing leading companies as potential enemies in mind, Yonekura emphasized during the press conference: "Proposals made by Keidanren tend to be taken as proposals made by leading companies. However, that is not the case at all. Communication is important."

Regarding future policy proposals, he said: "I would like to establish an environment in which the private sector can display its power to the maximum extent possible, by cooperating with the government from the perspective of the public." He wants to somehow incorporate requests from business circles into the growth strategy that the government is planning to draft.

In the past, top business leaders have been very influential in the policy-making process both in tangible and intangible ways, by using their broad-based and deep contacts in political circles.

A prime example from recent years is Chairman Hiroshi Okuda (now advisor to Toyota Motors), who was active during the Koizumi administration. He took part in the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, which was characterized as an engine for reform and growth policy-making, as a private-sector member. It is also said that he fulfilled various roles during the era when Mitarai was the chairman of Keidanren. For instance, he was involved in the selection of executives for the Japan Post Group.

The cooperative relationship between political and business circles remains cut off. Serious efforts to mend the broken relationship have yet to occur. Business leaders are eager to use the launch of Yonekura-led Keidanren as an opportunity to find a breakthrough in the present situation. However, some are skeptical about Keidanren executives' personal connections, with one person noting, "I wonder if the personal connections of Keidanren executives, including 18 vice chairmen, with political leaders are sufficient."

New chairman internationally active: He can outdebate foreigners in English

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Yonekura during the press conference on that day stressed that he is internationally active, revealing that he received a letter from a U.S. top business leader, when he was informally selected as the next chairman. He said that the letter said: "Japan-U.S. relations are important. Rest assured that we will actively support you."

He is said to have a good command of English and is capable of outdebating foreigners. He has many American acquaintances, including U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos and Columbia University Professor Jeffrey Sachs, special advisor to the UN secretary general. He has held the post of chairman of the Japan-U.S. Business Council, which hosts the Japan-U.S. Businessmen's Conference, since last year.

When he served as the president of Sumitomo Chemical, he was involved in the petrochemical project in Saudi Arabia. Because of this experience, he is close to Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Ali Ibrahim al-Naimi and Khalid Al-Falih, CEO of state-owned national oil company Saudi Aramco.

Yonekura is known to be close to People's New Party leader and State Minister for Financial Affairs Kamei, a fellow alumnus of Tokyo University. However, it is not known whether he has any other politicians whom he is especially close to in Japanese political circles. He will apparently need to build relations with Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Kan or State Minister for National Policy Sengoku, who will spearhead the effort to draft the growth strategy, from scratch.

Asked about what type of business manager he is, he replied, "I think am half a dogmatic type and half a coordinative type." Both inside and outside the company, he is reputedly a dogmatic type

despite his gentle exterior.

One reason for such a view is that he is more knowledgeable about in-house matters than anyone else. Although he is a graduate of Tokyo University's Faculty of Law, he is well versed in technical fields as well. So much so that when a technical glitch occurs at one of his company's plants, he looks at a blueprint of the plant and pinpoints the problem area.

However, he seems to give off a stubborn impression at times. He was involved in merger talks with Mitsui Chemical in 2000. However, the talks broke down in 2003 because the conditions set by each party were not met. Some in the Mitsui Group still view him as not listening to other people's opinions or being high-handed.

Many business leaders in Tokyo take the position that Sumitomo is a corporate group of the Kansai region, although it is a former industrial conglomerate like Mitsubishi or Mitsui. Some take a cool stance toward Yonekura taking office as chairman of Keidanren with one saying, "I wonder whether people will follow an Osaka-based company."

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